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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *July* the 29th, 1756.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

AMONG all the grievances that your correſpondents have from time to time laid before you, I have met with no one ſituation that bears any likeneſs to my own, or that deſerves your compaſſion and advice half ſo much. I am the brother of four ſiſters, am the eldeſt of my family, a freeman of the city of London, and by trade a ſhoemaker. My father enjoyed a ſmall place at court, which I believe, one year with another, brought him in about a hundred and fifty pounds. My mother was deſcended from the third or fourth couſin of an attainted

tainted Scotch peer, was a lady's woman when my father married her, and brought with her a very large portion of pride, virtue, and fine breeding. My father, who before his marriage had held up his head very high as a courtier, was now of greater conſequence than ever, in the thought that by this happy match he had allied himſelf to nobility. My mother indeed had one great mortification to ſurmount, which was, that ſhe had not only contaminated her blood by marrying a plebeian, who was formerly a broken tallow-chandler in the city, but had changed her illuſtrious maiden name for the coarſe and vulgar appellation of Mrs. Laycock. She comforted herſelf however, on the firſt appearance of her pregnancy, that ſo odious a ſirname ſhould be qualified in her children with the genteeleſt and moſt elegant chriſtian names that hiſtory or romance could poſſibly ſupply. My father approved the thought; and no ſooner was I a fortnight old, than I was chriſtened with great pomp and grandeur, by the name of PTOLEMY. My eldeſt ſiſter, who came into the world a year after, was called WILHELMINA CHARLOTTA, the ſecond PENTHESILEA, the third TELETHUSA, and the fourth HONORIA. There was alſo a ſecond ſon, who died within the month, chriſtened AGAMEMNON.

WE were all of us trained up to regard theſe names as marks of ſuperiority over other children, and ſuch as would one time or other moſt certainly make our fortunes. If maſter PTOLEMY was naughty, he was not chid as a vulgar child, but admoniſhed with all the gentleneſs and forbearance due to ſo illuſtrious a name. If miſs WILHELMINA CHARLOTTA, or her ſiſters miſs PENTHESILEA, miſs TELETHUSA, or miſs HONORIA forgot

forgot to hold up their heads, or were caught at romps with the boys, they were put in mind of their names, and inſtructed to act up to them. Our dreſſes were, if poſſible, as fantaſtic as our names, and the formality of our behaviour was of a piece with both. And though we were the plaineſt children in the world, and had not the leaſt probable chance of receiving a ſingle ſhilling to our portions, we were trained up to pride and idleneſs, and to turn up our noſes at all the Dicks, Toms and Harrys, the Sukeys and Pollys, that were our ſuperiors in the neighbourhood.

THE neceſſary expences to ſupport all this pride and folly, were more than could be ſpared from the narrow income of my father; and maſter PTOLEMY, who was now eleven years old, muſt have been as totally uneducated as the miſſes his ſiſters, if my father's brother, who was a reputable ſhoemaker in the city, had not taken me into his care, and ſent me to St. Paul's ſchool at his own expence. To this accident of my life I owe my eſcape from ruin. I was called king PTOLEMY by all the boys, and ſo laughed at for my importance, that I ſoon grew aſhamed of my name; and at the end of three years, when my mother thought it high time for me to return to court, I choſe to accept of an offer my uncle had made me of becoming his apprentice, and entering into partnerſhip with him when my time was expired. My father's conſent was pretty eaſily obtained, as he found himſelf in an ill ſtate of health, and unable to provide for me: but my mother was inexorable. She conſidered that my great name would but ill ſuit with ſo low a calling; and when ſhe ſaw me determined, ſhe told me in a flood of tears at parting, I was the firſt PTOLEMY that ever made ſhoes.

FOR

For my own part, I had been ſo humbled at ſchool about my name, that I never afterwards wrote more than the firſt letter of it: and as P very luckily looked more like Philip than Ptolemy, I have eſcaped the ridicule that would otherwiſe have been thrown upon me.

At the end of my apprenticeſhip my uncle gave me his only daughter in marriage, and dying ſoon after, I ſucceeded to his trade and effects, and to a fortune in good debts and money, to the amount of four thouſand pounds.

My mother, who had never thoroughly recovered the ſhock of her ſon Ptolemy's diſgrace, died a few months after my uncle, and my father followed her this ſummer, leaving to my ſiſters no other fortune than their names, which to my great ſorrow, has not been quite ſo current in the world as to enable them to live upon it. To be as ſhort as I can, they were all thrown upon my hands, and are like to continue with me as long as I live. But the misfortune is, that to keep my ſiſters from ſtarving, I muſt become a beggar myſelf; for the expences they bring, and the nothing they do, will not ſuffer me to go on. By their dreſſes, their names, and the airs of quality they give themſelves, I am rendered ridiculous among all my acquaintance. My wife, who is a very plain good woman, and whoſe name is Amey, has been new-chriſtened, and is called Amelia; and my little daughter, a child of a year old, is no longer Polly, but Maria. They are perpetually quarrelling with one another about the ſuperiority of their names; and becauſe the eldeſt ſiſter has two, and the others but one, they have entered into a combination to rob her of both, and almoſt to break her heart, by calling her miſs Laycock.

I HAVE ſhewn them the impoſſibility of my maintaining them much longer, and, as tenderly as I was able, propoſed their going into ſervice: but they told me with the utmoſt indignation, that whatever a ſhoemaker in the city might imagine to the contrary, the names of WILHELMINA CHARLOTTA, PENTHESILEA, TELETHUSA and HONORIA, were by no means ſervant's names, and unleſs I found myſelf enclined to make a better proviſion for them, they ſhould continue where they were. Nay, my youngeſt ſiſter, miſs HONORIA, who thinks herſelf handſome, had the impudence to tell me, that if ever ſhe condeſcended to lett out her perſon for hire, it ſhould be for other uſes than thoſe of a ſervant: to which miſs TELETHUSA was pleaſed to add, that indeed ſhe was entirely of miſs HONORIA's opinion; for that the ſin of being a miſtreſs was not half ſo ſhocking to her as the ſhame of being a ſervant.

YOU will judge, ſir, how deſirous I am to rid the houſe of them, when I tell you that I have even offered to take a ſhop for them at the court end of the town, and to give each of them a hundred pounds to ſet up with, in any way they ſhall chuſe: but their great names, forſooth, are not to be proſtituted upon ſhop-bills, whatever their brother PTOLEMY, the ſhoemaker, in his great zeal to ſerve them, may pleaſe humbly to conceive. Yet with theſe truly great names, that are not to be contaminated by trade or ſervice, they have condeſcended to rob my Till two or three times; and no longer ago than laſt week, when I caught my eldeſt ſiſter in the fact, ſhe told me with great dignity, that it became her brother PTOLEMY to bluſh, at laying her under the neceſſity of doing an action that was ſo much beneath her.